



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Officer

DATE: May 2, 2007

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item V(g): Consideration of resolution authorizing the acceptance of an approximately 18-acre donation (APN 700-0-190-075) located east of Yerba Buena Road and north of Yellow Hill Road, Little Sycamore Canyon Watershed, Ventura County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing the acceptance of an approximately 18-acre donation (APN 700-0-190-075) located east of Yerba Buena Road and north of Yellow Hill Road, Little Sycamore Canyon Watershed, Ventura County.

Background: Mr. Ted Winkler offered to donate (APN 700-0-190-075) his approximately 18-acres of land initially to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service (NPS) in his last will and testament. The NPS has opted not to accept property because of a road maintenance agreement. Because the MRCA manages, owns, and operates property within the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, the NPS felt that Mr. Ted Winkler's final wish of preserving his land would still be upheld and honored. The attorney handling the estate the estate will seek such permission from the courts.

Staff toured the property last winter with the NPS. The property contains a blue line stream that supports a rich oak and sycamore riparian woodland. According to the NPS, there has been considerable documented activity of mountain lions in the lower Yerba Buena and Yellow Hill area and the stream most likely serves as a wildlife movement corridor. There are no recreational trails on the property, and the native vegetation looked undisturbed and in good condition.

Through acceptance of the property, the MRCA would be required to pay the \$376.00 annual road maintenance fee. There is a possibility that the Yellow Hill Road Landowners Association, Inc. may vote to write the MRCA out of that maintenance agreement if there is to be no public access point off of the private access road (only Yerba Buena Road).

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To cover the cost of the annual road maintenance fee, an easement across the north-east corner of the property could potentially be sold to the adjoining owner. The owner has expressed strong interest. This sale could create a maintenance endowment. A subsequent Board action would be necessary to authorize an easement sale. The MRCA will not sell an easement that would facilitate any substantial environmental damage.